I have always been intrigued by the idea of observing my co-workers without involving myself in the conversation. Would they act as they normally do, would they be able to keep from involving me in their interactions? Of course I could not spend a whole day just observing, without doing my own work, so I chose to make observations over a period of days of a team that works together every quarter to put together our Rewards and Recognition event. It was difficult at first to convince them that I wouldn’t be providing any input in the meetings (as I am normally a part of this team). They would still need me to purchase items for this event, so I allowed them to provide me with a list of goods needed.

One might think that a small team within an office environment doesn’t constitute a sub-culture, but when you take a step back you see that these “teams” become small tribes. They recognize each other as being part of a single group with a single goal in mind. There may be struggles for leadership (chiefdom), but in the end they all will work to bring an event together that will repeat itself 4 times a year. Therefore this team or tribe is required to work in harmony repeatedly to reach their objective. The same as any tribe or troop would work together during different Seasons to find, kill, butcher, forage and distribute food.

***Methodology:***

I began my observations of the Rewards and Recognition team during their third meeting for preparation of the 2nd quarter event that was to be held on July 23, 2010. It was a simple plan, to sit back during each of their meetings and observe how they behaved in this group dynamic. It would be especially interesting to see how the dynamic worked when I wasn’t directly involved. I always considered myself the mediator when I did directly participate on the team. I wasn’t one who came up with the great new ideas for the game we would be playing at that quarter’s event, nor was I the mastermind behind creating the presentations and certificates that were needed. From my point of view it seemed that I was the one who would be able to expand on an idea, make sure everyone’s voice was heard and I was there to make sure we kept within our budget and other constraints. This time around I would not be putting my “two cents” in. Now I would be able to see if my role was really what I saw it to be, and if it was a role that was necessary in the function of this small tribe.

***Analysis:***

First things first let me give a breakdown of what the Rewards and Recognition team does. This is a team that each quarter is put to the task of putting together an event for all 150 employees in the Finance Enterprise Services Department. This event is to recognize employee excellence during the previous quarter. Recognition cards are drawn at random, and the employee recognized on that card will be playing in a game to win a prize. The Rewards & Recognition team has to come up with a game, implement it, come up with prizes for the winners, not to mention provide food and set a theme for the event. This is a very simplistic view of what the team does, but for the purpose of these observations it will provide you with enough information to see the what and why of the teams actions.

My first point of observation was to try and determine the roles that each team member had. This would solely be based upon my theory as there were no assigned roles or responsibilities that were formally set, except for one individual who was supposed to be the leader as he was the one who would take all the information gathered back to the Vice President for approval. However, I find that it is not always the assigned leader who guides the team or who has the respect of the others. For this part of observations I gave titles to each type of member as follows:

*Figurehead*: The assigned “leader” of the team. He is responsible for collecting all the ideas put forth by the team and presenting them to the Vice President for approval. He is very unsure of his role of leader, therefore he repeatedly questions decisions that were already made in previous meetings and does triple follow-ups to make sure things are getting done even when he has assurances.

*Team Leader*: This is the person that everyone listens to. Their ideas are well thought out and unique and they treat individual with consideration and do not act as if they are any different or better than the others. They are also the ones who will implement the ideas into action. They are well respected and other team members will turn to them first with questions before the figurehead. (I have seen the person in this role change in different quarters, however during this particular event period I observed that the leader was a female.)

*Historian or Secretary*: The historian or secretary is the individual who takes copious notes at each meeting and has kept all the notes from every quarter that they have been involved in. They can provide the other team members with what was decided upon in the previous meeting, where the team stands in the timeline and what worked or didn’t work in previous events.

*Treasurer*: Simply put, this is the individual who handles the budget for the event and keeps all ideas on track so that they do not require any materials that would go outside the budget. (This role would usually fall to me, however as I was not a participating member someone else took on this task and would provide me with the list of goods to be purchased that fell within the budget constraints).

*Worker’s*: These are the individuals who make sure the plan is put into action. They are present at every meeting, but usually don’t present new and exciting ideas. However, they are the ones who stand up when a game needs to be tested (This quarter the game that would be played during the event was Wheel of Fortune). They are also the ones who will do the bulk of the set-up and tear down on the day of the event.

*The “Mom”*: This is the person who does the little extras for the team members. Her actions may not seem to influence the event itself as the things she does seem more personal such as; asking each individual what task she can do to make things easier for them, or picking special coffee orders up for everyone the day of the event. In many cultures this role would fall to the matriarchs of large families.

I was able to observe each of these roles in action at some point or another during the 4 meetings I attended along with the day of the event. I was able to see the role of the Team Leader evolve as individuals would turn more and more to this person for acceptance of their ideas. As more of the team members directed their respect towards the Team Leader the Figurehead became more uncertain in his role and was often found after meetings at team members’ desks reassuring himself that they had taken care of whatever task it was they had been assigned. The most interesting to me was the “Mom”, who wanted to purchase coffee for everyone on the team the morning of the event. She took everyone’s personal request and on the morning of the event personally went and purchased the coffee for 9 team members and personally delivered them.

***Cross Cultural Comparison:***

**To be posted by August 7th.**

***Conclusion:***

**To be posted with Cross Cultural Comparison**